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ABSTRACT

A study of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners' self-efficacy and its relationship to achievement is reported. Subjects were four students from the highest level reading and writing class in Indiana University's intensive English program. Each was interviewed in a tape-recorded session, to explore his/her English learning experience and perceptions of self-efficacy in English learning. The researcher also observed the participants' class five times after the interviews, examined writing assignments, and had them respond to two questionnaires, one asking direct questions about language skills and the other a standardized adult literacy and ESL learning self-efficacy questionnaire. Results for each subject are described separately, and conclusions are drawn from the group's results. It was found that the subjects' self-efficacy was generally significantly higher than their learning achievements. However, their achievements did correspond to their perceptions of their own ability. Participants' interest in class assignment topics and perceptions of the teacher's support also influenced self-efficacy, both negatively and positively. Required tasks and assignments were perceived as helpful in promoting persistence and aspiration. Additional factors found influencing self-efficacy included learner's performance, comparison with other learners, task complexity, and effort expended on a task. Contains 11 references. (MSE)

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Self-Efficacy of English as a Second Language Learner: An Example of Four Learners

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Abstract

This study investigated the English as a second language learners' self-efficacy and its relationship with learners' achievements. Four students from a seventh-level reading-and-writing class at the Intensive English program of Indiana University participated in the investigation. The study conducted interviews, observations, written question lists and questionnaires to examine the participants' self-efficacy. Besides the factors and the relationship found between self-efficacy and achievements, the study revealed the needs of deepening self-efficacy investigation in the ESL field.

Self-Efficacy of English as a Second Language Learners:

An Example of Four Learners

The self-efficacy concept plays a great role in influencing human performance in several areas of human effort. Self-efficacy expectations are the beliefs about one's ability to perform a given task or behavior successfully. Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes" (p.193). Perceived self-efficacy influences choices of behavioral settings. People fear and tend to avoid threatening situations they believe exceed their skills, whereas they get involved in activities and behave assuredly when they judge themselves capable of handling situations that would otherwise be intimidating (Bandura, 1977). Delcourt and Kinzie (1993) documented that: "Perceived self-efficacy reflects an individual's confidence in his or her ability to perform the behavior required to produce specific outcomes" (p.36). Mikulecky, Lloyd and Huang (1994) in their developed Adult Literacy and ESL Self-Efficacy Questionnaire identified four essences of the self-efficacy concept: ability perception, activity perception, aspiration, and persistence.

Self-efficacy has been applied to many areas. Some of the most representative fields are: the treatment of various phobias (Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977; Bandura, Reese, & Adams, 1982), athletic performance (Feltz, 1982), interpersonal relationships (Kanfer & Zeiss, 1983), career choice (Betz & Hackett, 1986), career planning (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984), and social support (C. K. Holahan & C. J. Holahan, 1987). Because of its strong theoretical foundation, the concept of self-efficacy has appealed to more and more researchers; and thus, it has been applied to more practical and empirical studies. While the concept of self-efficacy has been widely applied, the researcher found that it was difficult to find a self-efficacy study in the field of English as a second language.

In this study, the researcher attempted to investigate the English as a second language (ESL) learners' self-efficacy and its relationship with learners' achievements.

What are the factors influencing ESL learners' self-efficacy? How does learners' self-efficacy influence their learning achievements? And how do learners' achievements influence their self-efficacy?

Borg, Gall, and Gall (1993) identified the purpose of qualitative research as: ". . . to develop an understanding of individuals and events in their natural state, taking into account the relevant context. . . Many qualitative researchers try to understand the phenomenological reality of particular individuals or groups" (p.194). Similarly they described quantitative research as: ". . . to make objective descriptions of a limited set of phenomena. . . initial quantitative studies of a research problem typically involve a search for pertinent variables and their interrelationships" (p.194). This study adopted the qualitative research method to understand the participants' self-efficacy phenomena in their ESL learning. In addition, the study used the quantitative research method to examine the essences underlying participants' self-efficacy and their relationship with the participants' achievements.

Method

Participants

The study selected four ESL learners who were at the seventh and highest level of the Intensive English Program (IEP) at Indiana University: Koyu, Jahi, Jaya and Tafe. They had an English writing-and-reading course together. The reasons for picking them up as participants were that they were assumed to have an abundance of English learning experience because they were at the highest level of the IEP program, that their English ability was supposed to be similar because of being assigned to the same level, and that four subjects rather than one in the same writing-reading class would provide the researcher with varied sources for examining the topic.

Koyu is a Korean girl who is around 24. She came to the United States in March, 1994 with the goal of studying music composition at Indiana University. In order to be permitted to study at the Music School, she needs to score at least 560 on the TOEFL

(Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam. Now she is studying at the IEP to improve her English ability.

Jahi is a Japanese man who is around 31. He came to the IEP in May, 1994 with his wife. He quit his job to come to the United States for the purpose of improving his English ability. Besides English courses, he audits a Politics course at IU.

Jaya is a Japanese lady who is around 29. She came to the IEP in May, 1994 with her husband, Jahi. Like her husband, Jaya's purpose here in the United States is to improve her English ability. Besides English courses, she audits a Spanish linguistic course at IU.

Tafe is a Taiwanese girl who is around 24. She came to the IEP in October, 1993 with the goal to improve her English ability. She wishes to obtain a score of 600 on the TOEFL. When she attains the goal, she will either go back to Taiwan to find a job or apply for graduate schools to study in the United States.

Instruments and Procedures

Before this study, every participant received a consent form to read and sign on it. This was to ensure the participants the protection of their privacy. In addition, participants could get a clear idea about the tasks they were doing along with the procedure of this investigation.

Interview: Each participant was given an interview at the beginning of this study. The researcher tape-recorded each interview and transcribed it right after she went home. This was to write down the participants' responses and contextual settings in detail when the impression was still clear in her mind. During the interview, the researcher tried to listen as much as she could, and to avoid guiding the respondent's answers toward any preferred direction. Each interview lasted about one hour. This was to avoid the tiredness of the respondents. The interviews were to investigate participants' English learning experiences and their self-efficacy in English learning. Sample questions were: "Why do you want to learn English?" "Can you share with me your English learning

experience?" "Do you feel confident in English writing now? Why?" "Do you feel confident in English reading now? Why?" Besides the interviews of the four participants, one interview was conducted to their writing-reading class teacher to obtain his opinions about the participants' classroom participation and their achievements. Example questions are: "What do you think about Jaya's classroom participation? Could you give me an example? What do you think about her writing ability?"

Observation: The researcher observed the participants' reading-writing class five times after the interviews. The reading-writing class was scheduled five days a week, 3:30pm to 5:30pm each day. Because of the conflicts between the researcher's class and the reading-writing class, the observations were done five times. The classroom activities included: textbook reading discussion (book title: Interculture Communication), students' writing assignment discussions and face-to-face writing counseling from the teacher. The researcher did not video-tape the observations with the concern that video-taping might affect participants' normal class reactions. However, she did use a micro-tape recorder to record the whole process. In order to record the observations promptly and in detail , the researcher acted as a non-participant observer.

Document Collection: The researcher asked the participants to lend her their writing assignments to be copied each time after the writing classroom discussion. The assignments, with the teacher's comments on them, were a good source to examine the participants' writing achievements. Besides, the participants were asked to show the researcher their TOEFL score reports. However, only Tafe was willing to show her recorded score reports. The other three participants only reported their TOEFL scores orally.

Written Question List: During the interviews, the researcher found that some participants' reports might be colored by their cultural background which emphasizes the humbleness of oral expression. As a result, the researcher selected some important questions and modified them to make a written question list for the informants to write

down their opinions in a more direct way. The sample questions are: "Which one is your better skills now? (reading, writing, listening, speaking) Why? Do you think you participate in the activities well in the writing-reading class? Please tell me how did you do and why?" The question lists were sent to the participants after interviews and were returned when they were completed.

The Adult Literacy and ESL Learning Self-Efficacy Questionnaire: Mikulecky, Lloyd and Huang (1995) developed the Adult Literacy Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (Appendix) to investigate learners' judgments of their capacities in English reading and writing learning. The questionnaire consists of 30 items. The scale ranges from "disagree a lot" to "agree a lot". One of the questions is:

I think that I am good at my writing work.

1	2	3	4	5
disagree a lot	disagree a little	not sure	agree a little	agree a lot

Participants judged their own ability and circled a number on the five-point-measurement scale. The scale has a high Cronbach internal consistency reliability coefficient: 0.802 and high face validity for the IEP students at Indiana University. The questionnaires were sent to the participants after the researcher completed her observations and were returned about four days later. This was to investigate learners' self-efficacy in English writing-reading learning with quantitative method and to triangulate the data.

After the transcriptions were done, the researcher sent each participant a copy of their parts to obtain their suggestions and corrections. This was to validate the collected data before it was put to analysis and final report.

Overall, the data collection took about two months. The procedure is shown on Table 1:

Table 1

Data Collection Procedure

week 1	week 2-5	week 6	week 7	week 8
interview consent form	observation documents collection written responses	teacher interview	report writing	data validation questionnaire

The transcribed data was scanned to be asserted with the sensibility of the researcher as well as with the repetition of the issues, and be put into categories, mainly based on the four categories of self-efficacy: ability perception, activity perception, aspiration, and persistence. The assertions for each subject from each instrument, then, were compared to his/her own achievements to search for the relationship between learners' self-efficacy and their achievements. The assertions from each instrument also were compared with the assertions from other instruments to search for their agreements or negative instances. Moreover, the assertions for all four participants were compared to investigate their differences as well as similarities and the possible reasons underlying these phenomena. For example, when Jahi was asked about his self-efficacy in accomplishing reading or writing tasks during the interview, his answers were all similar: "I feel confident. . . I don't think it bothers me. . . I am sure I can . . . ". According to these repeated answers, the researcher's assertion was: "Jahi had high self-efficacy in his reading and writing ability." And this was put into Jahi's ability perception category and marked "high" as reference. (If the researcher was not able to determine the level of the self-efficacy, she only recorded the responses into categories without marking the level.) Then Jahi's high ability perception in reading was compared to his reading score of the TOEFL Exam, which was very high. This comparison showed that Jahi's self-efficacy in reading corresponded to his achievement in the TOEFL Exam. The assertion from Jahi's interview was then compared to the assertion from Jahi's written list responses: "Jahi had strong self-efficacy about his reading ability according to his answer 'I can answer almost

100% of the reading questions.'" The data was thus triangulated as "Jahi' ability perception in reading was high which corresponded with his high achievement." Moreover, the assertions about Jahi's high ability perception in reading were then compared to the assertions about the other three participants' ability perception in reading. For example, the assertion about Tafe was: "Tafe's ability perception about her reading was low among the four participants which corresponded with her low achievement on the TOEFL score." Concluded from the above assertions, the researcher tentatively determined that participants' achievements corresponded with their self-efficacy, especially in the ability perception category.

Results

The results about Jahi were determined as follows:

Interview: Jahi showed high self-efficacy in interview: "When reading newspaper, I feel confident in understanding. . . I think I can catch the meanings very fast. . . I enjoy reading textbooks, too. . . If I am interested in some books, I won't give up reading them even there are challenges. I don't think writing assignments are hard to do, either. When I am writing, I'll worry about writing only when the topics are about housework or unfamiliar topics. . . I don't have hesitation in class discussion. As long as I have an opportunity to talk, I'll talk without hesitation. . . I can motivate myself to read because if I don't read, I'll lose my money [tuition], that is my motivation. . . I believe we must study, also be careful about the way how to do things to become successful."

Classroom Observation: Jahi actively spoke out his opinions freely although in some way, his English pronunciation was not easy for the researcher to understand. During reading discussions, the teacher tended to ask about his opinions to ensure some correctness of the Japanese cultural information written in the textbook. He acted on those opportunities promptly. Besides, the teachers' supportive responses helped Jahi's confidence in speaking, which might help build his confidence of oral expression in different topics in the class.

Document Analysis: Jahi was an enthusiastic writing learner. He was willing and confident enough to try advanced writing styles, such as critiques. From his essay assignments, the researcher could see he was very knowledgeable and confident in his ability discuss and criticize essays. He used professional information and logical reasoning in proposing his opinions and arguments, which not many IEP students do because of the difficulties. Jahi was very patient, revising his writing over and over, too. He handed in his drafts to be viewed by the teacher and rewrote it three times. On one of his essays, the teacher's comment was: "You are really an excellent writer!" He obtained a recent TOEFL score of 630, which was a very high score, with the reading comprehension sub-score: 63, listening comprehension: 58, and structure: 68.

Written Responses: On the written question list, Jahi wrote: "I like the writing assignment because it can correct my grammatical errors. . . I like reading English articles for leisure time. . . Reading is my better skill now. I am accustomed to read 1-2 books in a week. . . I don't think reading test bothers me because I can answer almost 100%. . . I think I participate in class activities very well. This, I want to have thanks to my teacher."

Teacher Interview: The teacher valued Jahi's achievements highly: "He is an extremely intelligent person, highly educated. When he writes essays, he works like a dog, put a lot of time into it. He writes good essays because he is extremely talented in the way that his essays are among the best that I ever had for any students in the years of my teaching."

The results about Jaya were shown as follows:

Interview: "Now I am taking reading-writing course because I want somebody to check my writing. . . I never felt good at learning English because of our own [Japanese] pronunciations." Jaya's persistence, aspiration and ability perception on reading were influenced by the topics of the tasks: "If the topic of the reading interests me, I will sit and read it. But if it's not interesting, I won't continue to read it. . . It depends on the

topic for me to catch the meaning [on reading]. If it [the topic] is an easy one, I can catch meaning fast. If I don't feel like to read, I'll feel guilty because learning English is my purpose to come here. But I often stop reading although I often feel guilty." In addition, her self-efficacy was influenced by how she performed: "Today I was writing a letter to my friend, I feel I can write smoothly. Compared to before, I feel more confident in writing now." However, in the comparison to her husband's self-efficacy and achievement, she became less confident: "I feel writing assignment is hard to do, and I don't enjoy reading. That is why my husband and my TOEFL scores are different."

Classroom Observation: In the classroom, Jaya participated in the class discussions well. Although most of the time she might not speak out, her facial expressions revealed her support for the class discussion. Sometimes she might say something briefly to express her doubt. Most of the time, she smiled and looked at her husband, Jahi, to listen to his responses rather than to speak out about her opinions promptly although the teacher turned to both her and her husband and asked about both their opinions many times.

Document Analysis: Jaya's writing assignments were mostly her reflections on the articles picked in class reading discussions. She expressed her opinions fluently in her writing with only "minor grammatical problems", commented by the teacher. Jaya fulfilled the class requirements pretty well, which included attendance, assignment completion and assignment revision. Her recent TOEFL score was: 557 with the reading comprehension sub-score: 55, listening comprehension: 60, and structure: 52.

Written Responses: On the written question list, Jaya wrote: "The reading text which we used is very difficult for me to read. . . I like the writing assignment because when I write, I can use freely my English abilities. . . If nobody checks my writing, it will [be] no meaning to write. It will be full of mistakes. . . My better skill is listening. I tried to improve it since I came here. . . Reading test will bother me if the topics are about the things I don't understand. . . I don't think I participate in class activities very well because the topic of the discussions were very difficult. I felt very sorry to the teacher."

Teacher Interview: The teacher talked about his impressions about Jaya: "Her essays were not as well-organized as her husband's. She is not bad. But he is excellent. Her essay is more personal, more friendly. It's more like she is talking to me as a friend. She made tremendous efforts to respond to my comments and to work on her composition until she is satisfied with it."

The results about Koyu were presented as follows:

Interview: Koyu's learning was strongly influenced by her impressions about the teacher. She felt the reading-writing teacher tended to segregate the students by their nationalities and treated them differently. This influenced her aspiration in learning writing and reading: "In the class, if I have opinion, I will say it immediately. But sometimes I hesitated because of the teacher. If he did not do [act like] that, I will participate. . . Writing now is getting harder for me, I will say, it is because of the teacher, at least, sort of that. I am not confident in my writing." Another factor in influencing her class participation was her interests on the reading or writing topics: "if it [the topic] is my favorite subject in the writing-reading class, I participate in the class activities well." Moreover, Koyu had strong self-efficacy on her required English learning tasks in terms of persistence: "If the reading is important, I will keep on reading. . . If it is required, I think I can concentrate on writing."

Classroom Observation: Koyu's class participation was mainly influenced by topics, too. On some topics, she became very excited and was active in expressing her opinions. However, if the topics did not interest her, she would just sit back in her chair and listened with hands crossed in front of her chest. She did not attend the class regularly. Through the researcher's five observation visits, she only attended the class twice. Her opinions toward the teacher might influence her aspiration in class participation.

Document Analysis: On Koyu's writing assignment, there were some mistakes which did not reflect her level. She wrote some very unclear and simple sentences to express a general idea. The researcher suspected that Koyu did not try her best in writing the

assignment. She did not hand in the assignments regularly, either. Her carelessness showed her lack of ambition compared to other participants. Koyu's recent TOEFL score was 533, with the reading comprehension subscore: 51, listening comprehension: 53, and structure: 56.

Written Responses: On the written question list, Koyu's responses were: "I sometimes enjoy the reading assignment. It depends on the subject. If there is interesting subject that causes my curiosity, I will enjoy reading but if it's not, I won't. This situation is the same as the writing assignment. Because I have to take the TOEFL Exam, and my weakness is reading section, I will continue to learn English reading. . . I need to continue to learn English writing because if I study graduate programs, I have to write something correctly. . . My classroom participation depends on the interest of the topics, too."

Teacher Interview: The teacher's impressions about Koyu were: "She makes quite a few mistakes. She needs editorial assistance. I feel she is a little less ambitious to use that format that I created in that class in which they can rewrite their compositions and ask me questions and I slightly alter the class as a matter of that fact, which I don't usually do. . . One time when she sat next to me and we talked about her essay, and we got half-way through the essay, and she said: 'I don't like this!'. . . She did not say what she didn't like, but I took it a little bit personally and so I tried to restructure the class so that if she didn't like that personal contact with me that she could still benefit from the class."

The results about Tafe were indicated as follows:

Interview: Tafe "decided" to have self-efficacy: "If I don't have self-efficacy on improving my English ability, it's worthless to spend a lot of money and time here. I need to have self-efficacy in English learning, definitely!" Her self-efficacy on writing depended on the complexity level of the sentence structures: "Basically, my essay is understandable. My sentence structures and wordings are not difficult ones. However, if I tried to use some complicated sentences, people seemed not to understand them." Her

interests toward the topics of the reading influenced her self-efficacy, too: "I have more vocabulary in my favorite topics. I can catch the meanings very well on the readings whose topics interest me." The efforts Tafe put on readings were another factor affecting her self-efficacy: "The more [reading] I read, the higher my self-efficacy is. If it is a long time for me not to read, I will become lack of self-confidence on reading." The requirement and importance of tasks influenced her persistence: "I can force myself to find out the main points of the reading assignments [even there is other interesting things to do]. . . When I come across a difficulty in writing, I will force myself to work it out, if it is an assignment." She had positive opinions about the teacher's teaching: "I appreciate the way the teacher taught the reading lesson. He allows students to speak out and participate in the discussions freely." Classroom Observation: In the classroom, Tafe usually participated in the class discussions very well. She raised questions or expressed opinions promptly, which showed her aspiration in class learning. Besides, her follow-up discussion with the teacher after the teacher's correction on her article revealed a certain degree of persistence in her learning. She wrote long and detailed essays for assignments. She used many complicated sentences; however, that caused many mistakes.

Document Analysis: From her classroom evaluation reports by the teacher, Tafe was described as enthusiastic in improving her writing-reading ability. She wrote long and detailed writing and used some more complicated sentences. However, there were many mistakes on Tafe's essays: prepositions, singular/plural distinguishing, wordings, phrases, semantic clarification, auxiliary verbs, and paragraph organizations. Tafe's recent TOEFL score was 497, with the reading comprehension subscore: 52, listening comprehension: 52 and structure: 45.

Written Responses: Tafe responded to the written question list as: "Sometimes I can't enjoy the reading assignment because I could not figure out what it said in the article. When I remind myself that learning is a process, I change attitude to solve the problems

and look for the insight meaning. As a result, I become like it. . . I like the writing assignment. The teacher is flexible to give us many choices to write. So it is fun. . . I would like to continue to learn English writing and reading because they will make me progress. . . I think I participate in the class activities better at the end of the session."

Teacher Interview: The teacher commented on Tafe's writings during the interview: "She probably makes more grammatical mistakes than anybody else in the class and I don't know why that is. It's not because she doesn't know what the mistakes are. When I called her attention to them [the mistakes], without what the suggestion of what the answer was, she would give me the correct answer. I am a little bit worried that some of her mistakes are almost fossilized. . . She is persistent in writing. She made tremendous efforts to respond to my comments and to work on her composition until she was satisfied with it."

Table 2

Participants' Recent TOEFL Score (March, 1995)

	Jaya	Jahi	Koyu	Tafe
Total	557	630	533	497
Reading	55	63	51	52
Listening	60	58	53	52
Structure	52	68	56	45

The results of the Adult Literacy and ESL Self-Efficacy Questionnaire showed the statistic features of the participants' self-efficacy. The statistic results in Table 3 represents the participants' total scores and means, as well as the scores and means in the four sub-categories: perception of ability, perception of activity, persistence, and aspiration.

Table 3

Participants' Self-Efficacy Score

	Jaya	Jahi	Koyu	Tafe	Total
Total	86	133	86	87	392
Mean	2.866	4.433	2.866	2.9	3.266
Ability	40	60	37	32	133
mean	2.857	4.285	2.428	2.28	2.962
Activity	13	20	11	18	62
mean	3.25	5	2.75	4.5	3.875
Persistence	24	40	26	22	112
mean	2.666	4.444	2.888	2.444	3.11
Aspiration	9	13	12	15	49
mean	3	4.333	4	5	4.083

Discussion

From the results above, some aspects about the participants' self-efficacy are found:

First, the participants' self-efficacy levels did not correlate with their learning achievements correspondingly. For example, Jahi was very confident in both writing and reading as revealed in both the interview, written responses and the questionnaire scores. He revealed his active attitude and even ambition in class discussions and written assignments. Jahi's writing and reading achievements were very high according to the teacher's comments and his TOEFL score. Tafe's self-efficacy was higher than Jaya and Koyu as shown on Table 2, and she did represent a strong self-efficacy in English learning during the interview and written responses. She was also ambitious in class discussions, persistent in writing revisions and interested in class activities. Besides, her

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire total score was the second highest score among the participants. However, her writing achievements were not good compared to other participants according to the teacher's comments. In addition, her TOEFL score was the lowest among the four participants, both in the total and sub-scores.

Second, participants' achievements did correlate with their ability perception correspondingly. For example, Jahi has high writing and reading achievements. He revealed his high self-efficacy in interview and question responses. His Self-Efficacy Questionnaire score was the highest among the four participants both in the total and the ability perception sub-category. On the contrary, Tafe had the lowest TOEFL score, her ability perception subscore in the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire appeared to be the lowest. The order of the participants' TOEFL scores (Table 2) corresponded to the order of their ability perception subscores in the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (Table 3), too.

Third, the interests in the topics influence the participants' self-efficacy. For example, Jahi and Jaya expressed in interviews that interesting topics will make them become persistent on the tasks. Koyu showed better participation in the class activities when the topics interested her as revealed both in class observation and written responses. In addition, Tafe demonstrated a higher reading ability confidence in her favorite articles as revealed in the interview.

Fourth, the teacher played an important role in influencing the participants' self-efficacy. This included teacher's impressions on the participants and his supports for them. For example, Koyu's aspiration, activity perception were decreased by her bad impressions about the teacher revealed in interview and observation. These affected her efforts in this class, class participation and assignments, and might indirectly have influenced her achievements. On the contrary, Jahi thought he did a good job in class participation. Responding to the question: "Why?", he wrote: "Thanks to the teacher!" The frequent questions of the teacher in ensuring some correctness of the Japanese information written in the textbook provided Jahi with great opportunities to speak in the

class. Besides, the teachers' supportive responses helped improve Jahi's confidence, too. Tafe's good impression about the teacher's writing assignment made her feel interested in writing as shown on her written responses. In addition, Jaya felt sorry to the teacher because that she thought she did not participate in the class discussions very well owing to the discussion topic.

Fifth, required tasks played an important role in improving participants' self-efficacy, especially in persistence and aspiration. For example, the requirement of tasks influenced Koyu's self-efficacy in terms of persistence : "If the reading is important, I will keep on reading. . . If it is required, I think I can concentrate on writing." Tafe demonstrated similar attitude as Koyu's: "I can force myself to find out the main points of the reading assignments [even there is other interesting things to do]. . . When I come across a difficulty in writing, I will force myself to work it out, if it is an assignment."

Sixth, other factors were found to be related to participants' self-efficacy: learner's performance, the comparison to other learners, the complexity of the task, and the efforts put on the task. For example, Jaya felt more confident in writing after she felt she was able to write smoothly in a letter to one of her friends. However, she felt less confident in her ability when she was comparing herself to her husband, Jahi, who had very high achievements. On the other hand, Tafe's self-efficacy in her perception toward her own ability was affected by the task complexity and her effort on the task. The more complicated the task was, the lower her self-efficacy became; the less efforts she had put on the task, e.g. reading, the lower her self-efficacy became, too.

Suggestions

From the results and discussions above, it is very obvious that English as a second language teachers should pay much more attention on learners' self-efficacy and its related factors because of its tremendous relationship with learning. The research on the issue of ESL learners' self-efficacy needs to be continued, expended, and deepened

because of the complicated factors involved in this issue and because of the lack of studies done so far. Some suggestions are proposed for further research:

First, participants' TOEFL scores, interview data had better be collected at least twice: at the beginning of a class session and at the end of that session. This can help the research to collect more about learners' progress factors to be compared to their self-efficacy shown during the session period.

Second, it is suggested that the participant numbers between male and female be equal to examine the possible factors which will reveal gender differences.

Third, cultural issues need to be considered in analyzing the data. For example, the researcher needs to pay much attention to distinguish clearly international participants' real intentions and the possible expressions colored by their culture background. Triangulation is recommended to assist the distinctions.

Fourth, because of the complexity of this issue, a deepened and broadened study is recommended to investigate the related factors in both macro and micro ways.

Hopefully, this study can contribute to the ESL teaching by drawing teachers' and researchers' attentions to learners' self-efficacy.

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